

Victoria "Vic" Cruz became interested in creating choreography long before she ever learned any actual dance technique, performing her first work at the age of 8 to "Rhinestone Cowboy" for a bemused audience of neighborhood children. When a serious leg injury at age 14 ended her extremely unsuccessful participation in soccer, she began taking (jazz) dance classes as a way to spend even more time with her best friend, and discovered an affinity for moving to music that became a lifelong pursuit.

A high school gym class, followed by joining the after school dance club, introduced Victoria to the craft of choreography in an environment that supported creative exploration over technical expertise. The dance department at Kenyon College provided a similar "safe space" for Victoria to experiment with choreography, as well as to collaborate with musicians, costume and set designers.

Participation in intensive Summer programs at the Harvard Dance Center during high school, and later as an undergraduate at the American Dance Festival, exposed Victoria to a wide range of dance technique and performance, with opportunities to learn from some of the most distinguished choreographers of the time, as well as those who knew and worked with the pioneers of Modern Dance. This continued after college through studies at the Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance, and at the Peridance Center in NYC.

Realizing that professional dance as a career was not a realistic option, Victoria earned a Master's Degree in Dance/Movement Therapy, and shifted focus to facilitating movement experiences for "non-dancers" of all ages as an adjunct to psychiatric and counseling treatment, in a variety of settings.

Throughout this post-undergraduate period to the present day, Victoria has continued to study various genres of dance technique, performing in studio "recital" settings, with small local dance companies, and later on workshop stages, in restaurants and at private events as a belly dancer.

She began studying Middle Eastern dance at Karavan Studio with Karen Barbee Adkinson in 2006, and (except for a hiatus in 2019/2020) has been actively involved in Project Band since the very beginning! She continues to participate virtually from her home in AZ, traveling back to TX for in-person practice as often as possible, because she believes that there's no other experience that provides the same opportunity for physical, intellectual and creative growth.